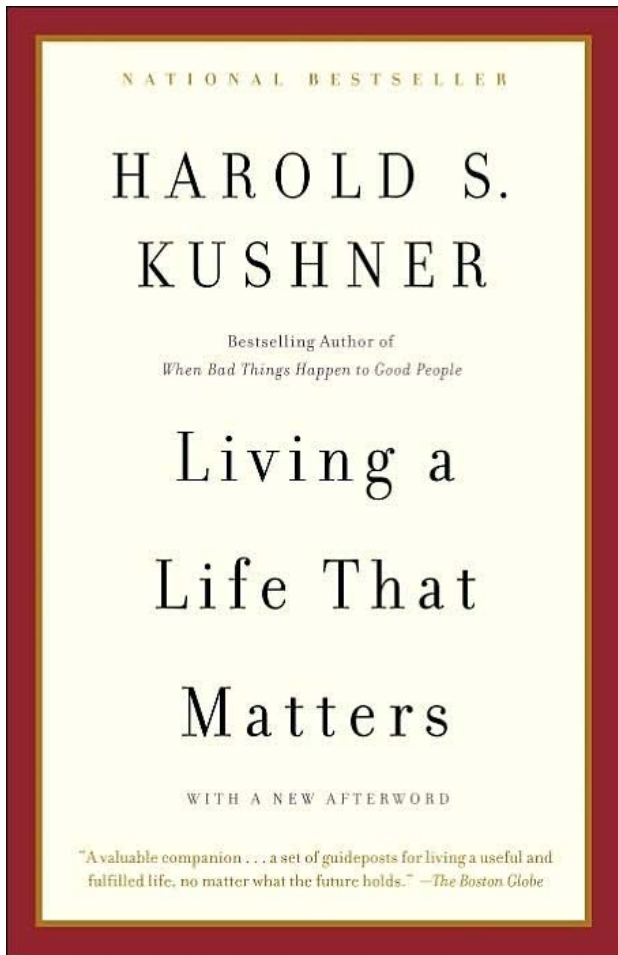


Harold S. Kushner: Living a Life That Matters
Book review by Mona Hall



Living a Life That Matters is written by a rabbi but you need not be a Jew to appreciate this warm and sympathetic book with very universal themes. They are themes like guilt, love, suffering and growing as a human being. Kushner talks through stories taken from his congregation, from literature and especially the life of Jacob.

Jacob was a patriarch and one of the central characters in the Old Testament. He was a trickster who got badly tricked himself and finally grew up to be a respectable man. A most significant image in his life was wrestling with an angel who was as strong as he himself. What does that mean, fighting with an angel? Well, one can think about it or read about it in the book... In any case, it's something very important... After that wrestling match Jacob got a new name, Israel.

This book belongs to the spiritual/self-help category. It's written in an easy, clear and accessible manner. It's not full of earth shattering revelations but it contains a warm spirit that supports the reader's growth towards a more mature humanness. Kushner for example writes about integrity and lack of it. What is integrity anyhow? Well, one can read about it in chapter five.

There is not very much written about God in this book. In fact there is nothing about God per se. But there are passages about a person's relationship to God. If you are allergic to God you can always interpret "God" to mean the best and holiest part in your own person, the part that is above the every day consciousness. It works pretty well.

Anyhow, I liked this book!

~ Mona Hall